AUTOMATED CLASSIFIER AND MEAT CUT FAT TRIMMING METHOD AND APPARA-TUS

Abstract

An apparatus and method for a meat cut classification and fat trimming for sensing the thickness of a layer of fat of a cut of meat and the various contours thereof as it travels along a conveyance and providing the fat thickness or classification information to a downstream system for performing a fat trimming operation. The meat cut classification system comprises a split/multi-belt conveyor having split/multi-belts proximately spaced apart extending in the same direction and having a uniform equidistant gap there between and said conveyor having a drive for conveying the meat cut through the classification system and a multi-probe mechanism assembly operable to position the probes between the multi-belts of the conveyor and extend the probes upward between the multi-belts to penetrate the meat cut for measuring the fat thickness. The probe assembly is further operable to translate the probe in a direction and at a velocity that is synchronized with the direction and velocity of the split/

multi–belt conveyor. This can be achieved by using the same drive for the conveyor and the probe mechanism.